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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 33rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 15 December 2006, at 4 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Yousfi ..... (Algeria)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.20/Rev.1: Establishment of the United Nations Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (*continued*)

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06-66406 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.20/Rev.1: Establishment of the United Nations Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (*continued*) (A/61/614; A/C.5/61/13/Rev.1)

1. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.20/Rev.1 (A/C.5/61/13/Rev.1), said that the requests contained in paragraphs 3 to 5, 6 and 7, and 11 to 15 of the revised draft resolution would entail no change in the resource levels indicated in the original statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/61/13; see A/C.5/61/SR.28, para. 5). While the details contained in paragraphs 5 to 8 and 10 to 15 of the original statement would remain unchanged, paragraph 9 of that statement, which covered the Verification and Assessment Unit, would no longer apply, as the posts referred to therein would not be required under the terms of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.20/Rev.1. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt that draft resolution, an additional appropriation of $2,344,700 would be required under section 3, Political affairs, and section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

2. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related oral report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and recalling its earlier report on the statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.20 (A/61/614), noted that the requests contained in paragraphs 3 to 5, 6 and 7, and 11 to 15 of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.20/Rev.1 would entail no change that had an impact on the previously requested levels of resources.

3. Taking into account that the Verification and Assessment Unit would no longer be requested at the current stage, and that the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to report to it within six months on the progress made in establishing the Register of Damage, the Advisory Committee reiterated the opinion it had expressed in paragraph 6 of its report (A/61/614) that every effort should be made to utilize existing available resources and that any savings should be reflected in the performance report for the 2006-2007 budget. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Committee should indicate to the General Assembly that, were it to adopt draft resolution A/ES-10/L.20/Rev.1, an additional appropriation of up to $2,344,700 would be required under section 3, Political affairs, and section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by the same amount under Income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

4. **The Chairman** proposed that, on the basis of the statement submitted by the Secretary-General and the related observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should adopt the following draft decision regarding the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.20/Rev.1:

> "The Fifth Committee, having considered the statements of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General[1] and the related report and oral report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2]
>
> *decides* to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/ES-10/L.20/Rev.1, appropriations up to $2,344,700 would be required under section 3, Political affairs ($2,141,800), and section 35, Staff assessment ($202,900), to be offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, for the establishment and maintenance of the Register of Damage."

5. A recorded vote had been requested on the draft decision regarding the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.20/Rev.1.

6. *A recorded vote was taken on the draft decision.*

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bahrain,

[1] A/C.5/61/13 and Rev.1.

[2] A/61/614 and A/61/641.

Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire.

7. *The draft decision was adopted by 128 to 5, with 1 abstention.*

8. **Ms. Pehrman** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that that group had supported the draft decision on the programme budget implications of the establishment of the United Nations Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (A/C.5/61/13/Rev.1), trusting that maximum use would be made of existing resources. Any savings identified should be reflected in the performance reports for the 2006-2007 budget. The European Union regretted that the Committee had departed from its practice of reaching decisions by consensus. Every effort must be made to return to its long-standing working methods.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.5/61/SR.34

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

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22 January 2007

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 34th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 18 December 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Yousfi ..... (Algeria)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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06-66574 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*)

First performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/61/593 and Add.1 and A/61/635)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), introducing the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/61/593 and Add.1), said that the report identified adjustments required because of variations in the rates of inflation and exchange and in standards assumed in the calculation of the initial appropriations. It also took into account, inter alia, decisions taken by policymaking organs and unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. The report did not include revised estimates or statements of programme budget implications in response to draft resolutions currently under consideration. Those amounts were still subject to the decisions of the General Assembly and would affect the level of the revised appropriation.

2. The total revised requirements under the expenditure sections amounted to $3.911 billion, which represented an increase of $81.2 million over the appropriation level approved by the end of July 2006. The revised estimate under the income sections amounted to $463.7 million, an increase of $28.9 million. Consequently, net requirements amounted to $3.447 billion, which represented an overall increase of $52.4 million.

3. Section C of the report, as well as schedules 1 and 2, dealt with adjustments required as a result of changes in exchange rates. The increase of $55.1 million reflected the general weakening of the United States dollar against several currencies. Additional requirements due to inflation amounted to $18.7 million and were described in section D of the report, while adjustments to standard costs (section E), reflecting the net effect of changes in standard salary costs and common staff costs, resulted in a decrease of $7.2 million.

4. Referring to section F of the report, he said that Professional vacancy rates had trended downward, decreasing from 7.6 per cent in January 2006 to 6.1 per cent in September 2006. General Service vacancy rates had followed the same pattern, falling from 3.9 per cent to 3.4 per cent over the same period. Since the report made no adjustment for vacancy rates, a further report on the situation would be provided in the context of the second performance report.

5. With regard to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses, commitments in the amount of $4.9 million had been entered into, of which $4.4 million had been certified by the Secretary-General and $590,000 had been certified by the President of the International Court of Justice. Requirements arising from the decisions of policymaking organs amounted to $9.6 million and were described in detail in section B of the report.

6. The report also referred to the redeployment of resources arising from programmatic adjustments, which had affected section 19, Economic development in Europe, and section 17, Economic development in Africa, of the programme budget. The proposed redistribution of resources was within the level of resources approved by the General Assembly for the relevant sections.

7. Lastly, the addendum to the first performance report (A/61/593/Add.1) provided information on the utilization of the subvention for the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The estimated unspent balance of $2.4 million would be surrendered under the programme budget as at 31 December 2006 in accordance with regulation 5.3 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

8. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/61/635), welcomed the quality of the Secretary-General's report, which provided adequate technical information and analysis. The revised requirements under the expenditure sections represented an increase of $81.2 million, or 2.1 per cent, over the initial appropriation approved by the end of July 2006. Paragraph 7 of the Advisory Committee's report contained a detailed breakdown of that additional expenditure.

9. He drew attention to paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Advisory Committee's report, which dealt, respectively, with the anticipated level of additional requirements for the current biennium not included in the first performance report and with the status of the contingency fund. He also noted that overall realized vacancy rates for the biennium 2006-2007 might prove to be below those budgeted.

10. The Advisory Committee was recommending that the General Assembly should approve the revised estimates contained in the Secretary-General's report, subject to such adjustments as might be necessary as a result of its consideration of matters currently before it, including the consolidated statement of revised estimates and programme budget implications.

11. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the effective functioning of the United Nations and valued the consideration of the first performance report. However, Member States would have benefited from receiving the report and the related report of the Advisory Committee in a timely manner.

12. The report identified adjustments in the level of appropriations for the 2006-2007 biennium due to variations in costing parameters, unforeseen and extraordinary items and additional mandates that were best dealt with in the context of the performance report under arrangements endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-second session. The revised requirements represented an increase of $112.3 million, for a total of $3.9 billion. Some of the programme budget implications resulting from the decisions adopted by other Main Committees would be revised to reflect the costing parameters approved by the General Assembly, which would affect the level of the revised appropriations. Most of the increases related to the implementation of decisions adopted at the 2005 World Summit. The Group cautioned against the notion that reform could be funded at the expense of other activities and mandates of the United Nations and supported the Secretary-General's request for an increase in the level of the contingency fund.

13. Resource requirements for special political missions had increased and the provision for such missions had nearly been depleted by the end of 2006; that would further increase the level of the initial appropriations. The only areas of growth in the regular budget were the provisions for special political missions, peace and security and human rights. The Group attached great importance to the Organization's development agenda and was concerned by the lack of growth in that area. It regretted the apparent breakdown in negotiations on the Development Account, which indicated a breach of faith on the agreement that had been reached when the budget had been negotiated. That left no alternative but to seek other measures to uphold the commitment on the Development Account, which was vital to developing countries and had been unanimously accepted in the past.

14. Once again, the performance report had not responded to General Assembly resolution 54/15 by identifying savings to be achieved through efficiency gains, which were to be transferred to the Development Account. It was clear that the funding mechanism was not functioning as originally envisaged and that the General Assembly needed to take action. A firm decision was required to increase the Development Account by the $5 million agreed to in principle by the Assembly in 2005. The Group appealed to all Member States to honour that commitment.

15. The Group noted that the Secretary-General had not utilized the limited budgetary discretion approved by the Assembly in respect of post and non-post requirements to meet the evolving needs of the United Nations, and that the Secretariat was in the process of establishing criteria for defining "evolving needs". The implementation of that experiment should be consistent with the principles and guidelines set forth in General Assembly resolution 60/283, section III.

16. The Group noted with concern that the Secretariat had again been unable to identify posts to be redeployed as part of the experiment approved by the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/283, the experiment would be terminated at the end of the current biennium. The Secretariat should have used the experiment to provide for three posts in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and one in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as requested in General Assembly resolutions 60/246 and 60/283. The Group attached great importance to the related functions and would appreciate a formal report on the steps taken by the Secretariat to identify four posts for redeployment.

17. Paragraphs 29 and 30 of the report referred to the cost of procurement reform measures currently under consideration by the Fifth Committee. However, as the General Assembly had not yet taken a decision on the related resource requirements, it was unclear why the information had been included in the first performance report. The Secretariat should clarify the matter before negotiations on procurement reform were concluded.

18. **Ms. Koski** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union had taken note of the revised estimates set out in the Secretary-General's report and endorsed by the Advisory Committee. The European Union looked forward to receiving further information about the Secretary-General's limited discretion for budgetary implementation, which had not yet led to any commitments in 2006-2007.

19. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan) said that the late submission of the first performance report meant that some Member States would find it difficult to incorporate the additional requirements into their national budgeting processes. Accordingly, he urged the Secretary-General to submit future reports no later than the end of November. He trusted that the Secretary-General would exercise his discretion in budgetary matters as appropriate.

20. **Mr. Sena** (Brazil) said that he, too, would like a formal explanation of why the Secretary-General had not used his discretionary authority to redeploy four posts in order to meet the requirements referred to in paragraph 32 of the first performance report. He also appealed to all Member States to honour their commitment to increase the level of the Development Account by about $5 million. Lastly, he wondered why the issue of procurement had been included in the first performance report, since procurement reform was being discussed under a separate agenda item.

21. **Mr. Afifi** (Egypt) expressed concern about the lack of progress made in the negotiations on the Development Account and appealed to all delegations to renew their efforts to reach agreement.

22. **Mr. Hussain** (Pakistan) said that the stalemate affecting the negotiations on the Development Account was clearly the result of specific policy decisions. Projects funded from the Account supplemented development activities in many developing countries, and it was disturbing to note that a routine recosting exercise had become such a significant issue. Moreover, it was difficult to understand how the Administration could have failed to identify the rather meagre sum of $5 million. In that connection, his delegation would support any alternative solution which took account of the concerns expressed by developing countries.

23. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), responding to the questions posed, said that he understood delegations' concerns about the timing of the submission of the first performance report. However, the calculations in the report were based on exchange rate fluctuations over the first 10 or 11 months of the biennium. If the report was issued any earlier in the year, the information used for those calculations would be out of date and the revised estimates would be less reliable.

24. The Secretary-General's discretionary authority to redeploy posts had distinct limitations. The redeployments effected during the previous biennium were described in paragraph 30 of document A/61/593; there had been no new redeployments between sections during the current biennium. Referring specifically to the four posts mentioned by the representative of Brazil, he said that consultations with the departments concerned had revealed that those requirements could be met through existing long-term vacancies. The three D-1 posts to head branch offices of the Office of the Ombudsman had not been identified because there were insufficient vacancies at that level.

25. In addition, although General Assembly resolution 60/283 authorized the Secretary-General, on an experimental basis, to enter into commitments of up to $20 million for positions and non-post requirements, the tight vacancy situation described in paragraph 27 of the Secretary-General's report meant that there were currently no resources available to meet evolving needs.

26. Lastly, he recalled that the Secretary-General's report on the identification of additional resources for the Development Account (A/61/282) detailed possible ways and means of increasing the Development Account by about $5 million. Annex I to the first performance report showed the effects of recosting the Development Account. The Secretariat had thus complied with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 60/246, but action remained to be taken on the recommendations contained in document A/61/282.

27. **Ms. Samayoa-Recari** (Guatemala) said that her delegation endorsed the comments made by the representatives of Brazil, Egypt and Pakistan, particularly with respect to the Development Account. Regarding the issue of the redeployment of posts, it would appreciate receiving the Controller's answers in writing.

28. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group firmly supported the request for written answers. As part of

the compromise reached in the negotiations on resolution 60/283, it had been agreed that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development would not be forced to meet additional requirements from within existing resources or by keeping existing posts vacant; instead, posts would be provided under the redeployment exercise. The Secretariat's response in that regard was therefore unacceptable.

29. Given that the performance report did not identify any savings that could be transferred to the Development Account, she asked whether previous performance reports had included such information, pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 54/15.

30. **Mr. Sach** (Controller) said that, in the past, it had not been possible to identify efficiency savings that could be transferred to the Development Account. Programme managers were reluctant to identify such savings because the immediate result was a reduction in their budgetary resources. It therefore might be appropriate to consider the possibility of using all sources of savings — not just efficiency gains — to augment the Development Account.

31. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba) said that her delegation endorsed the comments made by the representatives of Brazil, Egypt, Guatemala and Pakistan. The Development Account's financing mechanism clearly was not functioning and it was crucial that a solution should be negotiated forthwith.

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2006 (A/61/370 and A/61/498)

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council in 2006 (A/61/530 and Add.1)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.38/Rev.1: Situation of human rights in Myanmar (A/61/613; A/C.5/61/14)

32. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the report on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2006 (A/61/370), said that the report detailed only those budgetary requirements that related to resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council and that revised estimates relating to the Human Rights Council were reported separately. The expenditure requirements arising as a result of the Council's resolutions and decisions were estimated at $257,500, all of which could be absorbed within the resources provided under the programme budget for 2006-2007. The requirement of $84,000 for the biennium 2008-2009 would be considered in the context of the estimates for the proposed programme budget of that biennium.

33. Turning to the report on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its first session and its first and second special sessions in 2006 (A/61/530), she said that the expenditure requirements arising as a result of the Council's resolutions and decisions were estimated at $6,033,300. Of that amount, provisions for $4,328,600 had already been made in the programme budget for 2006-2007. Accordingly, it was anticipated that the balance of $1.7 million could be absorbed within the resources already provided for in the budget for 2006-2007, namely $1.6 million under section 23, Human rights, and $57,900 under section 28E, Administration, Geneva. The requirements for the biennium 2008-2009, estimated at approximately $2.6 million, would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for that biennium.

34. With respect to the report on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its resumed second session, its third session and its third special session in 2006 (A/61/530/Add.1), she said that the expenditure requirements were estimated at approximately $1.6 million. It was envisaged that, to the extent possible, that amount would be accommodated within the existing appropriation for 2006-2007, namely $1.3 million under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, $253,000 under section 23, Human rights, and $31,100 under section 28E, Administration, Geneva. Any additional requirements would be reported in the context of the second performance report on the programme budget for 2006-2007. Requirements for the biennium 2008-2009 were estimated at $755,100 and would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for that biennium.

35. Turning to the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.38/Rev.1 on the human rights situation in Myanmar (A/C.5/61/14), she said that, under the provisions of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would continue to provide his good offices and to pursue his discussions on the situation of human rights and the restoration of democracy in Myanmar, to offer technical assistance to the Government in that regard and to give all necessary assistance to enable his Special Envoy, once appointed, and the Special Rapporteur to discharge their mandates fully and effectively. The estimated costs of the continued good offices of the Secretary-General amounted to $198,400 net ($234,800 gross) for 2007. Technical assistance, if requested, would be provided as part of the technical cooperation activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. As to the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, the necessary budgetary provisions had already been made under section 23, Human rights, of the programme budget for 2006-2007. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.38/Rev.1, additional requirements amounting to $198,400 net ($234,800 gross) would be required for 2007 under section 3, Political affairs, and section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Those requirements and the necessary appropriation were already included in the Secretary-General's report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/61/525/Add.1).

36. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2006 (A/61/498), said that the budgetary implications of those resolutions and decisions would be absorbed under section 9, Economic and social affairs, and section 12, Trade and development, of the programme budget for 2006-2007. The Secretary-General, in paragraph 23 of his report (A/61/370), indicated that, should the actual requirements exceed the absorptive capacity of those sections, the additional provisions would be reported in the context of the second performance report for 2006-2007; the Advisory Committee had no objection to that approach.

37. With respect to the Secretary-General's report on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its first session and its first and second special sessions in 2006 (A/61/530), the Advisory Committee had noted that such related requirements as were not already provided for in the programme budget for 2006-2007 would be accommodated within existing resources and reflected, as necessary, in the second performance report for 2006-2007.

38. Regarding the Secretary-General's report on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its resumed second session, its third session and its third special session in 2006 (A/61/530/Add.1), the Advisory Committee had noted that, to the fullest extent possible, the requirements would be met from the 2006-2007 programme budget appropriation and reflected, as necessary, in the second performance report for 2006-2007. Concerning the "indicative requirements" for 2008-2009 shown in paragraph 21 of the report, the Advisory Committee stressed that approval of the revised estimates contained in the Secretary-General's report should not be seen as prejudging, in any way, the outcome of consideration of the proposed programme budget for 2008-2009.

39. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the Secretary-General's statement of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.38/Rev.1 on the situation of human rights in Myanmar (A/61/613), he said that the Advisory Committee had noted that such related requirements as were not already provided for in the programme budget for 2006-2007 would be included in the Secretary-General's report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the Assembly and/or the Security Council.

40. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan) said that his delegation supported the Advisory Committee's approach to the revised estimates resulting from action taken by the Economic and Social Council. Concerning the revised estimates resulting from action taken by the Human Rights Council, it trusted that every effort would be made to absorb any additional requirements as appropriate.

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/61/357, A/61/525 and Add.1-5 and Add.3/Corr.1 and A/61/640)

41. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/61/525 and Add.1-5 and Add.3/Corr.1), said that the report contained the proposed resource requirements for 2007 for 27 such missions.

42. In accordance with the Advisory Committee's prior recommendation (A/59/569/Add.1 and A/60/7/Add.37) that missions or offices should be presented in clusters on the basis of thematic or regional considerations, the missions had been grouped into three thematic clusters: special and personal envoys, special advisers and personal representatives of the Secretary-General (A/61/525/Add.1); sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels (A/61/525/Add.2); and United Nations offices, peacebuilding support offices, integrated offices and commissions (A/61/525/Add.3 and Corr.1). The proposed resource requirements for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) were contained in documents A/61/525/Add.4 and Add.5, respectively.

43. Efforts had been made to adapt and follow as closely as practical the format and presentation of budgets for peacekeeping operations. Further efforts would be made to improve and rationalize the grouping and presentation of future budget proposals for special political missions.

44. Regarding the extension or renewal of mandates, six missions had open-ended mandates; one mission had a mandate until 27 April 2008; three missions had mandates until 31 December 2007; six missions had mandates until various dates ranging from March to September 2007; and one mission was currently under consideration by the General Assembly. The remaining 10 missions had mandates expiring in December 2006, but it was anticipated that the Security Council would extend those mandates on the basis of reports and requests already submitted or to be submitted to it. It was assumed that all missions that had not yet been extended would be extended for periods similar to those approved for 2006. Details on the status of mandates could be found in paragraphs 4-6 and in the last column of table 1 of document A/61/525.

45. The Security Council, by its resolution 1723 (2006), had extended the mandate of the International Advisory and Monitoring Board until December 2007. The requirements of the Office of the Representative of the Secretary-General for the International Advisory and Monitoring Board, as well as the requirements of the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) and the potential mission in Nepal, would be submitted to the General Assembly during the first part of the resumed sixty-first session.

46. The total requirements of the 27 missions for 2007 amounted to $354,871,200 net ($389,888,700 gross). Mission-by-mission budget details of existing resources, estimated expenditures up to December 2006 and additional requirements for 2007 were presented in table 1 of document A/61/525 and in the reports on individual missions contained in the five addenda.

47. Of the total requirements, approximately $95.8 million would be met through the utilization of the balance anticipated to remain unencumbered at the end of 2006. UNAMI accounted for most of the unspent balance ($70.3 million), which was attributable to difficulties on the ground owing to which full deployment of the Mission had not been possible. The total additional requirements requested in the report therefore amounted to approximately $269 million net ($294 million gross). Mission requirements varied widely, ranging from $175,500 to over $169 million. Requirements for the two largest missions, UNAMA and UNAMI, accounted for over $237 million, or 70 per cent, of the total resources requested. A breakdown of the aggregate requirements by major component was given in table 2.

48. Regarding the proposed staffing requirements, a total of 3,518 positions were requested for 2007. That figure reflected a net reduction of 217 positions. The two largest missions, UNAMA and UNAMI, accounted for 2,531 positions, or approximately 72 per cent of the total positions requested. The mission-by-mission staffing requirements and changes from 2006 levels were presented in table 3 of document A/61/525. The specific action requested of the General Assembly was presented in paragraph 34.

49. **Mr. Knutsen** (Office of Internal Oversight Services), introducing the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the audit of the management of special political missions by the Department of Political Affairs (A/61/357), said that, according to the results of the surveys and interviews conducted by OIOS with the selected heads of special political missions, the Department's ability to backstop the missions appeared to be satisfactory. However, while the Department's ability to recruit personnel for the missions was improving, its ability to provide political and substantive policy guidance to the missions and to equip the Department's desk officers with necessary management tools needed significant improvement. Budget controls were inadequate and performance indicators in the results-based budgeting framework were insufficient to properly measure the Department's managerial performance.

50. Those shortcomings were partly due to a lack of clearly established responsibilities and specific policies relating to the management of special political missions. Furthermore, the Department had advised that it had inadequate human and financial resources to carry out its mandated responsibilities.

51. The mandates of the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had not been updated and did not accurately reflect their current roles and responsibilities with regard to special political missions. There was an inherent risk of duplication and overlap between their functions. Furthermore, budget documents did not clearly establish the responsibilities of the departments involved in managing and supporting special political missions.

52. OIOS had issued 15 recommendations calling for the updating of the mandates of the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; the establishment of clear policies and guidelines for managing special political missions; closer monitoring and greater accountability; improved internal controls; and enhanced coordination between those two departments and other partners in peace operations, including special political missions. The recommendations had generally been accepted and several were in the process of implementation.

53. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/61/640), said that, taking into account the pattern of expenditures for special political missions for the current period, as well as its comments in the report, in particular paragraph 90, the Advisory Committee recommended a 10-per-cent overall reduction in the resource requirements of $364,871,200 proposed by the Secretary-General. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee further recommended that the General Assembly should appropriate an amount of $232,500,480 under section 3, Political affairs, and of $22,515,750 under section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

54. **Ms. Koski** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union regretted that a number of the reports had been issued at a late stage and that the item was being introduced after the scheduled end of the main part of the sixty-first session. However, the European Union remained committed to providing sufficient funds for the important activities under consideration, and it would seek clarifications of specific points in informal consultations.

55. **Mr. Elji** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation attached particular importance to the good offices of the Secretary-General. He was concerned about the extension of the definition of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives to include initiatives undertaken by the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council. The budget for special political missions had increased exponentially in recent years, meaning that Member States, especially the smaller countries, were having to deal with significant increases in their assessed contributions under the regular budget. Given that special political missions established pursuant to Security Council resolutions resembled peacekeeping missions, it would be preferable to determine Member States' contributions using the scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations.

56. The budget submission for special political missions had been prepared using the results-based budgeting approach, but the shortcomings of that approach were apparent in the reports. Most of the expected accomplishments of the missions went beyond or ran counter to their mandates and did not reflect real needs. In that connection, paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 55/231 instructed the

Secretary-General to ensure that, in presenting the programme budget, expected accomplishments and, where possible, indicators of achievement were included to measure achievements in the implementation of the programmes of the Organization and not those of individual Member States. The Secretariat must adhere to the provisions of that resolution and ensure that the objectives of special political missions were in line with the relevant legislative mandates.

57. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) had overstepped his mandate a number of times and the relevant budget submission failed to respect the principles governing results-based budgeting. Furthermore, the Secretariat had ignored the General Assembly's recent request that it should review the relevant programme narrative. He would pursue that question further in informal consultations.

58. The expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement relating to mutual diplomatic relations between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic and to the border between those two States were not related to Security Council resolution 1559 (2004); furthermore, they clearly violated the provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/231 by attempting to measure the achievements of the States concerned rather than those of the Secretariat. In that connection, he recalled that the Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs had visited Beirut during the Israeli aggression to discuss the relationship between the two countries and that meetings had been held on border issues.

59. He expressed surprise at the lack of objectivity and neutrality demonstrated by the Secretariat in preparing the relevant budget submission. Although Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) called on all foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon, there was no reference to that provision in the expected accomplishments, even though Israel's forces continued to occupy a section of Lebanese territory. The Secretariat continued to focus on issues unrelated to the Special Envoy's legislative mandate in order to deflect attention from the real problem affecting the region, namely the Israeli occupation. He was also surprised to see that the Special Envoy's mandate had been expanded to cover Security Council resolutions other than 1559 (2004), even though other arrangements had been made for ensuring the implementation of those resolutions.

60. Lastly, referring to the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/61/357), he welcomed the acknowledgement of budget control weaknesses within the Department of Political Affairs and the recognition that insufficient information and justifications were provided in connection with the logical framework for results-based budgeting. The Secretariat should be guided in that regard by the relevant legislative mandates and should provide adequate justification for all resource requirements.

61. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan) said that his delegation was concerned that the reports' late issuance had left little time for Member States to fully consider them. Year after year, the Committee was not given sufficient time to consider budget submissions for special political missions. Under the circumstances, his delegation felt that, based on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, commitment authority with assessment must be an option. His delegation recognized the efforts made by the Secretariat to improve the presentation of the budget submission, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/255. At the same time, it was in full agreement with paragraph 6 of the Advisory Committee's report. His delegation wondered whether the 10 special political missions whose mandates were due to expire in December 2006 had been extended. It was time to consider financing special political missions through the scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations.

62. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa) said that her delegation was also very concerned by the late issuance of the report. Her delegation attached great importance not only to the peace and security activities undertaken in the context of special political missions, but also to human rights, development and other important United Nations activities. The initial 2006-2007 appropriation for special political missions had been exceeded in 2006 by $20 million, and the General Assembly was being asked to provide in 2007 nearly the same amount as had originally been allocated for the entire biennium. Thus, the provision for special political missions had doubled. Her delegation noted that the Committee typically approved funding increases for special political missions with little difficulty, but argued at length over funding increases for development issues. All areas of the Organization's work should be given equal treatment.

63. Her delegation requested clarification of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee in

paragraph 91 of its report, as it did not support across-the-board reductions, particularly since they would adversely affect smaller special political missions. The OIOS report raised a number of important issues related to how the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations functioned, and the risk of overlap in their mandates. The Assembly should devote adequate time to the consideration of the report. Lastly, her delegation noted with appreciation that the Secretariat had improved the presentation of the budget submission.

64. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had recommended a 10-per-cent overall reduction on the basis of the pattern of expenditures for special political missions for the current period and the points raised in its report, particularly in paragraph 90, which referred to a single large mission. Thus, the Advisory Committee was not recommending an across-the-board reduction.

Agenda item 151: Financing of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (A/61/519 and A/61/598; A/C.5/61/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.11: Financing of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste

65. **The Chairman** drew attention to an interim financing request, contained in a letter dated 15 November 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/61/598), concerning the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

66. **Ms. Pollard** (Director, Peacekeeping Financing Division) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of UNMIT (A/61/519) had provided for 22 general temporary assistance positions at Headquarters for the backstopping of the Mission to be financed from the commitment authority requested for the period from 25 August 2006 to 31 March 2007. A subsequent review of the status of the support account for peacekeeping operations had shown that those 22 positions could be financed, in the amount of $2,307,500, from the support account resources approved for the current financial period (1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007).

67. **Mr. Abdelmannan** (Sudan) said that his delegation was surprised by the link established, in the Secretary-General's letter, between the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and UNMIT. The indication that Security Council resolution 1706 (2006) had authorized a limited expansion of the operations of UNMIS in Darfur was inaccurate, as such an expansion would not be fully authorized unless and until the Government of the Sudan took a decision on the matter. The reference to the rapid deployment of UNMIS personnel into Darfur was also inaccurate, as such personnel were not going into Darfur. The letter should have clearly noted that the operations in Darfur were to be carried out through the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS). Furthermore, the letter indicated that exceptional measures were needed in view of the extraordinary demands being placed on the financial and human resources that the United Nations had taken so long to approve. In fact, the Mission was being carried out under completely normal conditions. His delegation therefore wished to express its reservations to the letter from the Secretary-General.

68. *Draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.11 was adopted.*

Other matters

69. **Mr. Elji** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation understood that the inspection of cars entering the United Nations compound was important, and requested that the Department of Safety and Security should be asked to make no exceptions in that regard. His delegation also noted that the catering contract for the United Nations Headquarters cafeteria would soon expire and requested that the Secretariat should take into account the decline in the quality of food and service over the last five years when considering bids for the new contract.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.5/61/SR.35

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Chairman: Mr. Yousfi ..... (Algeria)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.15: Comprehensive review of governance and oversight within the United Nations and its funds, programmes and specialized agencies (A/C.5/61/17; A/C.5/61/L.15)

1. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) introducing the statement of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.15, entitled "Comprehensive review of governance and oversight within the United Nations and its funds, programmes and specialized agencies" (A/C.5/61/17), said that under the draft resolution (paras. 3 and 4) the Secretary-General was requested to submit reports on revised terms of reference for the Independent Audit Advisory Committee and on the strengthening of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and, in addition, to submit to the General Assembly, at its resumed sixty-first session, if possible, but not later than by the end of its sixty-first session, three reports on enterprise risk management and the internal control framework, results-based management, and the accountability framework.

2. The activities would be carried out under programme 24, Management and support services of the biennial programme plan for the period 2006-2007, and section 28A, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

3. Additional requirements would arise under paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, in connection with which it was anticipated that in-house expertise would need to be significantly augmented by, inter alia, expertise from within the United Nations system, the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination machinery, and consultancy, for the provision of technical advice and guidance on best practice. Resource requirements were currently estimated at $1.3 million (gross) and $1.2 million net.

4. No provision had been made under the programme budget for the biennium in relation to the three reports. To the greatest extent possible, the Secretariat would accommodate the requirements for the studies from within the appropriations under sections 28A and 28D; any additional requirements would be reported in the context of the second performance report. The summary of the action to be taken by the General Assembly, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.15, was contained in paragraph 9 of the statement.

5. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that under paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.15 the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to submit to it, at the first part of its resumed sixty-first session, a report on revised terms of reference for the Independent Audit Advisory Committee and a report on strengthening the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

6. Under paragraph 4, the Assembly would request the Secretary-General to submit to it three reports at the second part of its resumed sixty-first session if possible, but not later than by the end of its sixty-first session on enterprise risk management and the internal control framework, results-based management, and the accountability framework.

7. As indicated in the Secretary-General's statement, the reports requested under paragraph 3 of the draft resolution would not entail additional resources. The Advisory Committee noted, with regard to the reports requested under paragraph 4, that it was anticipated that expertise within the Secretariat would need to be augmented by expertise from within the United Nations system, including the Chief Executives Board for Coordination machinery, and by recourse to consultants for the provision of technical advice and guidance on best practice. Preliminary estimates of the resources required for the three reports requested in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution amounted to $404,100 for the report on enterprise risk management and the internal control framework, $508,000 for the report on results-based management, and $404,100 for the report on the accountability framework for a total of $1,316,200 gross ($1,206,300 net). The Advisory Committee had also been informed that the reports would encompass the elements specified in paragraphs 10 to 12, 14 and 17 of the related report of the Secretary-General (A/60/883). The Secretary-General's reports should also take into account the relevant comments and observations of the Advisory Committee, as contained in its related report (A/61/605).

8. The Advisory Committee noted that, to the fullest extent possible, the requirements for the studies would be accommodated from within the appropriations available under section 28A, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, and section 28D, Office for Central Support Services, of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007. Additional requirements, as necessary, would be reflected in the second performance report for the biennium 2006-2007.

9. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to adopt the following oral draft decision on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.15:

> "The Fifth Committee, having considered the statement of programme budget implications submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/61/17) and the related oral report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (see A/C.5/61/SR.35):
>
> (a) *Decides* to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.15, entitled 'Comprehensive review of governance and oversight within the United Nations and its funds, programmes and specialized agencies', the activities requested under the resolution would be added to the programme of work approved in resolution 60/246 under section 28, Management and support service;
>
> (b) *Also decides* that resource requirements for the activities requested would amount to $1,316,200 gross (or $1,206,300 net) for the biennium 2006-2007 to be accommodated to the fullest extent possible from within the appropriations available under section 28A, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, section 28D, Office of Central Support Services, and section 35, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, and any additional requirements as may be necessary would be reported in the context of the second performance report for the biennium 2006-2007."

10. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Agenda item 144: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East (*continued*)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (*continued*) (A/C.5/61/L.17)

Draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.17: Financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

11. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.17, which provided adequate financing to enable the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to implement its mandate.

12. The Group noted that Israel had failed to comply with previous General Assembly resolutions requesting it to pay the amount of $1,117,005 resulting from the incident at Qana in 1996. Paragraph 21 of the draft resolution reiterated previous requests on that matter and requested the Secretary-General to report thereon to the General Assembly later in its current session.

13. **The Chairman** said that action on draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.17 would be taken at a subsequent meeting of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.